

CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1–6.

7. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 16, including the step of aiding the vendors to enter assemblies of items by providing a software module configured to recognize an item which is an assembly of items in the item catalogue such that the individual items may be listed as individual items in the listing catalogue ~~parts and to generate a list of the component parts~~ items for entry into the listing catalogue.

Please cancel claims 8–14.

15. (Currently amended) A method for facilitating the exchange of items of information between vendors and seekers through a communication network, said method including the steps of:

creating a fixed item catalogue;

having a service provider create a catalogue of items that can be supplied by vendors that includes a finite amount of items such that if an item is not present in the item catalogue it cannot be listed as being available for supply by a vendor;

creating a listing catalogue;

having registered vendors indicate that they are able to supply items by entering vendor item records into a listing catalogue listing the physical occurrence of items in an item catalogue such that if an item is not present in the item catalogue a vendor cannot list an occurrence of such item in the listing catalogue the item records corresponding to items listed in an item catalogue;

having generating search queries by identified registered seekers search for items listed in the item catalogue for a specific item of information, the seekers only

having access to search the item catalogue and not having access to the listing catalogue nor to information about any vendor;

automatically searching the listing catalogue for the physical occurrence of items matching those being searched for by the seekers in the item catalogue and providing details of the matched items, but not details of the vendors, to the seekers; and

~~enabling seekers at their option to view the identity of the vendor of any of the matched items; and~~

subsequently, automatically providing ~~the identity of~~ contact information for vendors of those items where the seeker has requested such information and simultaneously automatically providing contact information for the seeker to the vendors ~~the seeker and the items viewed to the identified vendor of any viewed item~~ through the communication network.

16. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein a vendor designates a seeker, who has been identified to the vendor, as a seeker who is to be denied future access to that vendor's item records, said searching step being further defined as excluding that vendor's items in the listing catalogue from those provided to the seeker as a result of the seeker's query.

17. (Currently amended) A network business application for performing the method of claim 15, comprising:

an Internet accessible graphical interface, in computer-readable media, in communication with an electronically searchable listing catalogue of items offered for sale by vendors, wherein the listing catalogue includes a finite amount of item listings such that if an item is not present in the item catalogue it cannot be added to the listing catalogue;

a software module including search means for searching the listing item catalogue in respect of identified seeker search queries for items;

a search results software module including storage means for storing identified seeker and vendor contact details for each instance of a search query matching a listing of the listing catalogue; and

said software module including providing means for automatically providing information regarding the identified seeker to vendors corresponding to the matched listings and subsequently providing the identity of said vendors for viewing by the identified seeker only when said vendor allows seeker such access.

18. (Previously presented) The network business application of claim 17, further including a filtering software module configured to allow a vendor to designate that the vendor's listings are not to be viewed by seekers specified by the vendor.

19. (Previously presented) The network business application of claim 17, further including a dismantler software module configured to generate a listing of item identifiers being sub-parts of an assembly item in response to submission of the assembly item's identifier.

20. (Currently amended) The network business application of claim 17, further including a software module configured to aid vendors in creating item listings for submission by presenting them with a series of suggestions of possible terms that vendors can use to describe items listed in the listing catalogue ~~options to select between~~.